

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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PYROXYLINE COMPOUND.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 494,793, dated April 4, 1893.

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To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, LEONARD PAGET, a citizen of the United States, residing in the city, county, and State of New York, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Pyroxyline Compounds; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description of the invention, which will enable others skilled in the art to which it appertains to make and use the same.

Compounds of pyroxyline are solid, liquid, or of an intermediate state. A solid compound is produced by acting upon soluble pyroxyline with the vapor of camphor. In such a compound, the pyroxyline has suffered what is known as "conversion." By conversion is meant that the pyroxyline has lost all structural and cellular form, and has become a homogeneous mass. A liquid compound may be produced by immersion of the pyroxyline in an active liquid solvent; in such a solution of pyroxyline conversion has first occurred and is implied. That conversion has first occurred can be shown by the experiment of treating the pyroxyline with a minimum amount of the active liquid solvent; then evaporation of the excess of solvent, if any, leaves a converted mass that by no known chemical treatment can be brought to the stage preceding conversion. Conversion and solution have therefore sometimes been used as synonymous terms in relation to liquid solvents. Conversion and solution can be produced by a simple solvent substance, such as wood alcohol, when, generally, the solution can be diluted without limit by addition of the same substance. But there are some substances as for instance some essential oils that produce conversion of the pyroxyline and throw out their own excess, that is, no more oil is taken up by the pyroxyline than is necessary to the act of conversion, that of solution in the same oil being refused. Conversion and solution can also be produced by a mixture of substances neither of which is by itself a solvent, as with alcohol and ether; and it may occur, as it does in this case, that dilution of the solution may be made without limit by one of the substances and not by the other, the addition of this other producing

precipitation of the converted pyroxyline. Consequently, besides conversion and solution, there must be studied the phenomena of dilution, when an attenuated solution of pyroxyline is desired.

When pyroxyline is converted and dissolved in methyl alcohol, the solution can be diluted to any desired extent with anhydrous ethyl alcohol, but not with anhydrous amyl alcohol, because the latter produces precipitation of the converted pyroxyline at an early stage, which the former does not. In fact where in the art a quick-setting gelatinous, plastic compound is required, a precipitant such as amyl alcohol may be advantageously employed to bring about a solidification and to set free the solvent more quickly. Besides these considerations there are others, especially those relating to degree of volatility, requiring attention when a more or less dilute pyroxyline compound is desired; and this sketch of the state of the art is given in explanation of the object of my invention, which is broadly to extend the list of known solvents and diluents of solvents of pyroxyline. But more specifically the object of my invention is to procure solvents of pyroxyline and diluents of solvents of pyroxyline whose characteristics and properties can be more definitely determined beforehand, or so-to-say, prophetically, than is the case with those hitherto employed in the art. I have discovered such a series of solvents and diluents of solvents of pyroxyline in what are chemically known as the mixed ethers, produced by etherification of mixtures of the primary alcohols under the action of sulphuric acid or its equivalent, by the ordinary process of etherification; and I have found that according to the nature and proportion of the primary alcohols and of the acid taken, so can the resultant mixed ether have certain desired properties not to be obtained by the mixtures of the primary alcohols, but which might be the resultant of the properties of these alcohols taken individually, could such an individual use have been possible. If a mixture of seven or eight volumes of amyl alcohol and one volume of methyl alcohol be employed as a solvent for soluble pyroxyline there results no perfect

solution and but an imperfect conversion, the pyroxyline presenting itself in an amorphous condition and having very little coherence. Such a product is wholly unsuitable to any known application of the art. But if this mixture of amylic and methylic alcohols be submitted to distillation in the presence of sulphuric acid, or in other words to a process of etherification by sulphuric acid, the distillate is a very excellent solvent of pyroxyline of low medium volatility, and is a diluent of its own (and of other) solution without limit.

Other excellent solvents of pyroxyline are obtained by similar treatment of mixtures that are themselves solvents without such process of etherification, but the solvency of which is advantageously modified thereby, admitting, as one such modification, of effective dilution with such an addition of a precipitant alcohol as would without such treatment throw down the whole of the converted pyroxyline in an amorphous condition; such mixtures are, for example,—

For twenty-five parts by weight of strong sulphuric acid:—

A. Grain alcohol, fifteen parts by weight; wood alcohol, ten parts by weight; fusel oil, fifty parts by weight.

B. Grain alcohol, ten parts by weight; wood alcohol, fifteen parts by weight; fusel oil, fifty parts by weight.

C. Wood alcohol, twenty-five parts by weight; fusel oil, fifty parts by weight.

The solvency of the distillates from these alcoholic mixtures increases with the alphabetical order of the attached letters. And the examples have been taken as providing by etherification excellent solvents, although very poor solvents themselves as regards A. and B. C. is a powerful solvent mixture of low volatility; it becomes by etherification a more powerful solvent mixture of greater volatility.

The operation of etherification can be conducted in a leaden still, at a temperature corresponding to the boiling point of the mixture. Rectification is generally necessary.

Having thus fully described my invention, what I claim, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. A pyroxyline solution which consists of pyroxyline dissolved in a mixed ether produced by the distillation of a mixture of wood alcohol, fusel oil and sulphuric acid.

2. A pyroxyline solution composed of pyroxyline dissolved in a mixture of mixed ethers produced by the distillation of a mixture of wood alcohol, grain alcohol fusel oil and sulphuric acid.

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Witnesses:

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